

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 1, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 64 S.D. 3 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: Thursday, April 2, 2015; 3:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 64 S.D. 3 is to make appropriations for positions and the continued implementation of the Preschool Open Doors program and for subsidies for the program.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill provided that its passage cannot replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget. The DHS offers the following comments.

Act 169, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2013, established the existing child care assistance program, called Preschool Open Doors (POD), as the statewide school readiness program and that the program will be administered by the DHS. Act 169 is codified as section 346-181, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The POD program currently serves low to moderate income families whose children will be eligible for kindergarten in the following school year.

Act 169 appropriated \$6,000,000 for the POD subsidies this state fiscal year (SFY) 2015. The additional appropriation allowed DHS to provide subsidies to approximately 1,300 children

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

to attend licensed preschools to support the children's readiness for kindergarten entry in August 2015. Until SFY 2014, the POD program served 315-320 children utilizing \$1.6 million in the base budget.

Applications are currently being accepted for POD services that will start July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. The Executive Budget for the SFY 2016-2017 biennium requests only the \$1.6 million in the annual DHS budget, which will cover approximately 242 children each year of the biennium under the revised family co-payment structure of the POD program. The co-payment structure is set forth in Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 17-799; these rules were implemented in July 2014.

Consequently, if the \$6,000,000 for POD funds is not restored via S.B. 64 SD3, DHS estimates that approximately 1,050 children will not be served by the POD program after the close of SFY 2015. If the measure is passed, the DHS would also need \$440,000 for administrative costs to continue to implement POD services for three positions and to contract POD services.

If the Committee decides to pass or amend S.B. 64 SD 3, the effective date of the bill should be amended to be July 1, 2015 to facilitate the POD application and enrollment process for the coming SFY.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

Representative Luke, Chair
Representative Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the House of Representatives Finance Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 64 SD3, Relating to Human Services
Hearing April 2, 3:30 pm, Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Finance:

My name is Robert G. Peters and I currently serve as the chair of the State Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB) composed of 19 public and private members representing state departments, the early learning community, philanthropy, and the State university system (please see attached list of members). On behalf of the members of the ELAB, I urge you to support SB 64 SD3 (Relating to the Human Services) to restore \$6 million for the Pre-school Open Doors (POD) program operated by the Hawaii Department of Human Services. Restoration of the funding at last year's level is the goal. This program has been in existence since 1990 and has provided a valuable lifeline for hundreds of families every year throughout the state.

POD provides critical subsidies for income-eligible families sending their children to a licensed preschool during the school year prior to kindergarten entry. Given that we know that child care is generally the second largest expense in family budgets after rent and mortgage (PATCH), these subsidies broaden access and opportunity to families in need. POD allows low-income children and families in our Islands to afford childcare so that parents can work or pursue higher education. At present, nearly half of the children served are from single-parent households.

The goal of POD is to promote school readiness for children, and the program focuses on meeting the needs of the child. During the current year, almost 1300 children are being served by the program while another 900 remain on the waiting list. If the \$6 million is not restored for the 2015-16 year to operate POD, over 1,000 children will be denied the chance to be school-ready when entering kindergarten. This will be most seriously felt among the underserved and at-risk children of our State. And, the need for this critical safety net program is clear given the 54% increase in POD applications this past year.

We appreciate that you are all well-aware of the school readiness advantage of those who benefit from POD and, therefore, urge you to support SB 64 SD3 to include the \$6 million for Preschool Open Doors. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

Sincerely,
Robert G. Peters, EdD
Early Learning Advisory Board, Chair

Early Learning Advisory Board Members Represent the following:

Department of Human Services

Hawaii Council of Mayors, Maui Representative

Head Start Provider

Philanthropic Organization (Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation)

Center-Based Programs

Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council

Department of Health

Parent Representative

Head Start Collaboration

University of Hawaii System

Department of Education

Kamehameha Schools

Family Child Interaction Learning

Home-Visiting Program Provider

Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

Hawaiian Language Medium Early Learning

Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Hawaii Council of Mayors, Kauai Representative

Family Child Care Program



251 Napua St. Wailuku, HI 96793
242-1608

March 31, 2015
RE: SB 64 In Support

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to ask you to do everything possible to restore critically needed funding of \$6 million to the essential Preschool Open Doors Program. Hundreds of low to middle income Maui County families of 4 year old children are counting on this aid to help them afford safe and dependable child care for their children while they are at work or school or job training. Without it they are at risk of job loss, homelessness and other very bad consequences. Please show Hawaii's families of young children that you do care and understand their challenges by making sure the program is fully funded for 2015-17 and beyond.

In my work as Project Specialist at the Maui County Early Childhood Resource Center over the past 8 years I have personally assisted hundreds of families to access financial aid for child care from the Preschool Open Doors Program. In 2014-15 in particular the help from POD has enabled parents of children affected by the change in Kindergarten entry to work and attend college classes because they have affordable, safe and dependable child care. Without this program, many parents would have to quit their jobs because they can no longer afford the cost of tuition. These families cannot rely on Child Care Connection to meet their needs if POD is not funded in 2015-17 because of Child Care Connection's outdated income guidelines and benefits structure. The CCC benefits are so much lower than POD provides that most low to middle income families don't qualify for enough to make the cost of child care remotely affordable. I have already personally referred approximately 100 families from Maui County to submit applications for POD just this month and many more agencies and child care providers have done the same. The hundreds of families we serve will be crushed to learn that this lifeline may be yanked from their grasp.

I believe it's time for a reality check, there is no way the DOE is going to be able to ramp up and provide preschool for all the late born 4 year olds from low-income families by this August. And even if it was possible, it would cost a lot more than \$6 million to do it. So the bottom line is that unless POD is restored, thousands of children from low to middle income families across the state are not going to be able to go to preschool. It puts parents of these children at risk of losing their jobs. When families lose aid for child care it sets off a cascade of harmful side effects including job loss, homelessness, debt, adverse health effects and more. It's high time that government realizes that affordable child care is not just an education issue. It's a jobs issue, an economic stimulus issue, a prevention of homelessness and child care abuse and neglect issue, a health and safety issue.

I believe you do understand their struggles and will do the right thing for Hawaii's families and restore POD funding.

Sincerely,

Melanie Padgett

Maui County Early Childhood Resource Center Project Specialist

242-1608

MCECRC/MFSS 1844 Wili Pa Loop Wailuku HI 96793



Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Douglas Mersberg, Executive Director

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 64, SD3, Relating to Human Services

Hearing

Date: April 2, 2015

Time: 3:30 PM

Place: Conference Room 308
State Capitol

Wai'anae Coast Early Childhood Services has been providing preschool services on the Wai'anae Coast since 1973. 94% of our families receive some form of tuition subsidy in order to afford our services, including from the Preschool Open Doors program.

Wai'anae coast elementary school principals maintain that many of the children that enter their kindergarten classrooms are two years behind in their school readiness skills. Their schools' test scores confirm this assertion. Longitudinal studies show that quality preschool services have a positive impact on school success for low-income children. There are hundreds of children in our community who are unable to access preschool services.

Our organization is in full support of maintaining \$6 million in childcare subsidies to the Preschool Open Doors program, which is operated by the Dept. of Human Services. This is based upon our capacity to serve more children, the school readiness needs of children in our community, and the benefits that programs like ours can provide.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 3:30 P.M.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol**

RE: SENATE BILL 64 SD3 RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 64 SD3, which makes appropriations for positions and the continued implementation of the preschool open doors program and for subsidies for the program.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The Chamber strongly believes that focusing on early childhood is critical because brain development takes place by age five. We believe it is imperative to begin investing early in a child's life, when the brain is in this state of tremendous growth potential. In 2008, the Hawaii Economic Benefits Study of early education for Hawai'i showed that for every \$1 Hawai'i invests in a quality four-year early learning program, the state will receive a return of \$4.20. This is not only about return of investment, but in providing for our employees and their children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Early Childhood Consultant

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Council on Accreditation
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AFFILIATIONS

Alliance for Children & Families
Kauai United Way
Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way



March 31, 2015

**Testimony on SB64 SD3-Human Services-
Pre-School Open Doors**

House Committees on Finance

Thursday, April 2, 2015, 3:30 p.m.

Conference Room 308, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street,
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony submitted by: Howard S. Garval, MSW, President & CEO,
Child & Family Service



**Child & Family
SERVICE**

Private, nonprofit since 1899

Aloha, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Committee members. I am Howard S. Garval, President & CEO of Child & Family Service, Hawaii's oldest and most comprehensive human service nonprofit organization with services on every island and touching the lives of 40,000 Hawaii residents from keiki to kupuna each year. I am testifying in strong support for SB64 SD3.

This bill would restore \$6 million in funding through the Department of Human Services for the Preschool Open Doors Subsidy Program. This is not a new program or even a request for increased funding. Supporting the \$6 million is just keeping level funding in place.

There are several reasons that it is important to restore this funding to the state budget:

- Child care is often the second largest expense in family budgets after rent or a mortgage. This funding allows low-to-middle income parents to return to work. With the high costs of child care, especially for quality programs, this can be out of reach for some families and prevent them from achieving financial self-sufficiency. With the high cost of living in Hawaii, it is usually necessary for both parents to work and for single parents they must work to support their families.
- This funding prioritizes the most underserved and at-risk children. These children are the most likely to enter school not ready to learn which can lead to school failure.
- The funding helps qualifying Hawaii families pay subsidized tuition at a DHS-licensed group child care facility.
- State funding to Preschool Open Doors can provide strong leverage for obtaining matching Federal dollars and other sources of national funding. The current Administration and the Legislature are being prudent in seeking to maximize Federal funds that could be available to the State and reduce the pressure on General Funds.
- Preschool Open Doors promotes school readiness. Based on 2013 HSSRA data, only 14.5% of children statewide display comprehensive readiness for Kindergarten.

For all of the reasons above, I urge you to support our youngest keiki and their 'ohana by restoring this much needed funding to the state budget.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

With Aloha,

Howard S. Garval, MSW
President & CEO

{ Keiki to Kūpuna }

Healthy Child Development * Teen Programs * Family Services * Senior Care



250 Vineyard Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 521-9531

FamilyProgramsHawaii.com

TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

HEARING: Thursday, April 2, 2015
3:30 PM
Conference Room 308

FROM: Judith Wilhoite
Family Advocate
It Takes An `Ohana

RE: SB64 – Relating to Human Services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am the Family Advocate for Family Program Hawaii's *It Takes An `Ohana* (ITAO) program and a resource caregiver. I, along with my ITAO Advisory Committee, strongly support SB 64.

I am writing today to ask you to restore funding for the Pre-school Open Doors (POD) program. POD has provided a hand up to children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend preschool, including many foster children. This is important, for research has consistently found a high need for early intervention and early childhood education services among children in foster care as a result of their developmental, emotional and behavioral problems. One study that analyzed data for foster children ages two to 24 months old found that nearly six in ten were at high risk for neurological or cognitive developmental impairments (Vandivere, et al., 2003). Yet, several studies indicate that many young children do not receive the early intervention or early childhood education services they need to address these problems. If our foster keiki don't have POD, many will not be able to have the all of the benefits a good preschool experience provides.

That said, early childhood education is important for all children. It has been shown to:

- Improve school performance
- Raise math and language abilities
- Sharpen thinking/attention skills
- Reduce special education placement
- Lowers school dropout rates

It is very important for all of us to come together to make certain that all of Hawaii's Keiki have the opportunity for school success. I can't think of any better place to put our resources, can you?

Thank you for this opportunity to voice strong support for SB 64.

We help kids

Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health FIRST RELATIONSHIPS

April 2, 2015

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chairperson House Finance Committee =
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair House Finance Committee

-
-
President Sharon Taba
President-Elect Joey
Keahiolalo
Secretary Naomi Kau
Treasurer Gail Breakey

Re: SB 64, SD-3 (HSCR 1173) Relating to DHS, Open Doors Preschool

Dear Representatives Luke, Nishimoto and Committee Members

I am Gail Breakey, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health in strong support of this bill.

-
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Dewayne Bettag •
-

This is not a new program. Preschool Open doors has been serving low income - disadvantaged young children and their families since 1990.

Pre-school Open Doors enables disadvantaged young children to be exposed to early learning experiences needed for school readiness, and enables their parent (s) to go to work knowing their child is safe. The program currently serves 1,287 families; there is also a waiting list of 900 families. This program is critical to the safety net for vulnerable families; half of the families are single parent families. Current funding of \$6 million will end on June 30, without legislative action and support.

A pre-school experience is important for the emotional health and wellbeing of low-income families, many of whom are exposed to adverse circumstances in their homes. It is critically important for young children who have been abused /and or physically or emotionally neglected, or are at risk. This service reduces parental stress and offers children a safe place to interact with caring adults, learn social skills and develop cognitive foundations for learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this issue, and I urge you to support Preschool Open Doors with a \$6 million budget.

Sincerely,



Gail Breakey, RN, MPH
HAIMH Policy Committee



96 Pu'uhonu Place
Hilo, HI 96720
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(808) 969-7512

www.ahapunanaleo.org

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Pūnana Leo o Kaua'i

Niulahiki

Hawaiian Language Online

Senator Sylvia Luke, Chair
Senator Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Finance

Date of Hearing: 4-2-2015

Time: 3:30 pm

Location: Conference Room 308

*Testimony of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Non-Profit Educational Organization
Dedicated to the Revitalization of the Hawaiian Language*

Re: SB64, SD3 RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee on Finance:

My name is 'Ekekela Aiona, Executive Director of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the revitalization of the Hawaiian language.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo is in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB64, SD3.**

Please support SB64, SD3, to restore \$6 million for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program operated by the Hawai'i Department of Human Services to the State Budget. This program has been in existence since 1990 and has provided a valuable lifeline for hundreds of families every year throughout the state.

Our many 'Aha Pūnana Leo families with keiki in the 4-year-old "gap" group – too old for preschool and too young for kindergarten – had to readjust greatly to the new kindergarten age requirement state law. One of the major readjustments for our families was financial in nature due to the additional year the affected keiki would need to be in preschool. For many families, without financial assistance from the Preschool Open Doors program, the only option would have been to have their keiki *not attend preschool for one entire year*. Devastating. In a language revitalization program such as the Pūnana Leo, one year out of preschool would have been detrimental to the overall development of the keiki. With support from POD, though, this readjustment was possible.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo as an organization, too, had to readjust to the new kindergarten age requirement. Our integrated curriculum, teacher training, and program protocol were revamped to meet the needs of the affected keiki. The 'Aha Pūnana Leo also submitted to an external review and received full accreditation under the authority of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium, the first such early childhood education accreditation done through an indigenous language in the world, in order to prepare to demonstrate quality.

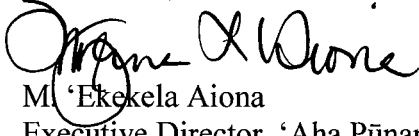
Our families, keiki, teachers and staff complied and did what was needed in order to ensure the interest of our keiki was of the highest priority, which included POD eligibility for our families. When our eligible families were given the wonderful news of POD assistance, a grateful sigh of relief was released.

As a non-profit educational organization, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo is in constant search of funding streams to help our families and their keiki afford preschool. Tuition costs at the Pūnana Leo are kept at an absolute minimum in order to make payments affordable. In spite of this, many of our Pūnana Leo keiki would not be able to attend preschool if not for the POD program.

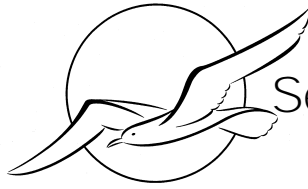
The possibility that our struggling families may not have the critical lifeline that POD provides is not in the best interest of Hawai'i's families and keiki. In turn, this is not in the best interest of the future of Hawai'i.

Please continue to support Hawai'i's families and keiki by passing SB64, SD3. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this extremely important measure.

Mahalo nui,



M. 'Ekekela Aiona
Executive Director, 'Aha Pūnana Leo
96 Pu'uhonu Place
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-4304



Seagull Schools

Main Office: 1300 Kailua Road, Kailua, Hawaii 96734
Tel: (808) 261-8534 · Fax: (808) 261-7052 · www.seagullschoools.com
Email: admin@seagullschoools.com

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the House Finance Committee

Re: Testimony Supporting funding for Preschool
SB64 - Open Doors in State Biennium Budget

Dear Representatives:

I am deeply concerned that the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program will not be continued because funding is not appropriated. The POD program is simply the best investment our state can make to support school readiness experiences that also empower parents to be economically productive within the workforce.

I urge you to restore the \$6 million in biennium funding for this program that will allow 1,000, 4 and 5 year old, low income children to attend preschool. Seagull Schools presently provides childcare to 62 children with funding from POD.

Sincerely,
Chuck Larson
Seagull Schools

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School Locations

Kailua & Administrative Office – 261-8534	Adult Day Center – 674-1160
Kapolei & Food Service – 674-1444	Ko Olina – 671-6999
Ocean Pointe in Ewa – 689-6021	
The Early Education Center, Honolulu – 533-0004	
Mauna Lani, The Big Island of Hawaii – 885-3557	





CHILDCARE BUSINESS COALITION

Committed to Quality Education

April 1, 2015

The Cole Academy

The Hawai'i Baptist
Early Education
Association

KCAA Preschools
of Hawai'i

Kama'aina Kids

PACT
Parents & Children
Together

Rainbow Schools

Seagull Schools

Waianae Coast Early
Childhood Services

Waikiki Community
Center

Liaison:
Christina Cox
2707 So. King St.
Honolulu, HI
96826
(808) 941-9415
ccox@kcaapreschools.org

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Christina Cox, Liaison, Childcare Business Coalition

Subject: SB 64 SD3 4/2/15 CR 308

The Childcare Business Coalition is in strong support of SB 64 SD3.

In existence since 1997, the Childcare Business Coalition's (CBC) mission is to promote quality center-based programs which are accessible to all families with young children ages six weeks to 6 years of age and to promote public policies which support that effort. We serve more than 5,000 children daily at more than 90 centers on four islands. The majority of our members' programs are nationally accredited and serve low/middle income families. Collectively we provide more than \$300,000 in tuition assistance to qualifying families every year to supplement the various statewide public and private subsidy programs which are unable to meet on-going demand. Many of us hold fundraisers and/or write grants to local trusts and foundations to support our in-house tuition aid programs. We presently serve more than 200 Preschool Open Doors children.

Research has repeatedly shown that children who participate in a quality school readiness program prior to entering kindergarten have greater success in school and in life.

Preschool Open Doors (POD) is a lifeline for many low and moderate income parents. Since the entry age for public school was changed last year another 5,000 children on average, require an additional year of preschool prior to entering kindergarten.

Prior to SFY 2014 POD served an average 315-320 children with a base budget of \$1.6 million. This year, thankfully the \$6 million expansion funds enabled the program to serve up to an additional 1,050 eligible children who are preparing to enter kindergarten the next Fall. It would be a tragedy to let an administrative oversight which apparently led to the unintentional omission of that additional \$6 million in funding, leave nearly 1,000 children who were adversely impacted by the change in kindergarten entry age, without that critical year of school readiness prior to kindergarten entry.

We respectfully request that your Committee approves SB 64SD 3 and that you restore funds for POD at the \$6 million level for preschool subsidies as well as provide \$440,000 to fund 3 positions for program implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



*For over 100 years,
preparing children for success*

2707 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826

Phone: (808) 941-9414
Fax: (808) 946-1468

www.kcaapreschools.org

April 1, 2015

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Christina Cox, M.S. Ed., President
KCAA Preschools of Hawaii

Subject: Strong Support for SB 64 SD 3

KCAA Preschools of Hawaii was established in 1895 by the Woman's Board of Missions to serve the children of immigrant workers. We serve over 900 children per year in 7 NAEYC accredited preschools on Oahu. **More than 50% of our students are low-income and over 80% go on to attend DOE elementary schools. We manage tuition subsidies from 7 different sources, including Preschool Open Doors (POD), each with its own set of requirements.** We have an \$8 million annual operating budget with 130 employees.

We presently serve the following number of POD-subsidized children by area:

- Kailua-4
- Kalihi-13
- Moiliili-12
- Kakaako-10
- Kahala-5
- Hawaii Kai-1

Preschool Open Doors (POD) is a lifeline for many low and moderate income parents, enabling them to work or attend school while their child is in safe hands. Since the entry age for public school was changed last year another 5,000 children on average, require an additional year of preschool prior to entering kindergarten. Restoring the \$6 million in POD funding that was apparently unintentionally omitted from the Executive budget would help to ensure that at least 1,000 of those 5,000 children negatively impacted by the kindergarten entry age change would get the support they deserve to be prepared to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

I respectfully request that your Committee approves SB 64SD 3 and that you restore POD funding at the \$6 million level for preschool subsidies as well as provide \$440,000 to fund 3 positions for program implementation.

Please note that while I also serve as Liaison for the Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii which represents more than 90 centers throughout the State I am testifying in full support of this measure today as the President of KCAA Preschools of Hawaii, a position that I have held for the past 14 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

ATHERTON - KAILUA
KUAPA - HAWAII KAI
LAURA MORGAN - KAPALAMA HEIGHTS
MOTHER RICE - MOILIILI
MURIEL - KAKAAKO
NA LEI - KALIH
WAI-KAHALA - KAHALA



April 2, 2015

TO: Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
Honorable Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Re: **Support for SB 64, SD3: Relating to Human Services (Preschool Open Doors)**
Hearing #2: April 2, 2015 at 3:30 PM, Conference Room 308

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 64 SD3, and to restore \$6 million in funding to the for the Preschool Open Doors Program Fiscal Year 2015-16 and Fiscal Year 2016-17.

Good Beginnings Alliance is Hawaii's leading independent, policy and advocacy non-profit organization on children's health, education and safety. We build a united voice to educate and advocate for Hawaii's children.

Since it was established in 1990, Preschool Open Doors (POD) allows low-income children and families in Hawai'i to afford childcare so parents can go to work or pursue higher education. **Last year, 2,208 families applied for this program. POD operated by Department of Human Services currently serves 1,287 statewide. Nearly half of the children served in this program come from single-parent households.**

POD helps qualifying families pay subsidized tuition at a DHS-licensed group childcare facility, such as a preschool. The program prioritizes underserved and at-risk children, for the year prior to kindergarten to promote school readiness. Without your support, \$6 million in funding for this critical safety net program will end on June 30, 2015, which means thousands of children will not be prepared to start kindergarten, including the children who will be nearly six years old due to the kindergarten entry age change.

President Obama has focused efforts to help all working families with young children afford childcare. His administration believes that ensuring that children have access to high quality affordable early childhood programs can help children prepare for school and succeed later in life while strengthening their parents' ability to go to work, advance their careers and increase their earning potential. Investments in high-quality early education generate economic returns of over \$8 for every \$1 spent.

President Obama is proposing an expansion of access to childcare assistance to assure that all eligible families (those with incomes below 200 percent of poverty – approximately \$40,000 for a family of three with children age three and under) have access to a subsidy to pay for quality childcare so they can work or attend school or job training. To qualify for this funding, states will be asked to develop sound plans to build the supply of quality care for infants and toddlers and ensure the subsidies they provide will cover the cost of quality care.

Restoring the FY 2014-15 level funding to the biennium budget is a step in this direction and will enable nearly 1,300 children throughout the state gain access to the Preschool Open Doors Program (POD). POD also helps to provide subsidies for part-time care for children enrolled in Head Start, a federally funded program that provides quality services to qualifying preschoolers and their families which runs half-days.

According to the Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment for 2012-13, more than 40 percent of children entering kindergarten had not attended a pre-kindergarten program and more than 90 percent of students in Department of Education (DOE) classrooms did not meet benchmarks in all dimensions of school readiness. This trend is alarming, but it can be reversed.

DOE data also shows that one out of three children in Hawaii is not reading at grade level by 3rd Grade. This is a key indicator to high school graduation rates and later success outcomes.

Hawaii ranks second to last out of the most affordable states in the country. Childcare is generally the second largest expense in family budgets after housing costs. The average income of families served by POD is \$33,000 annually. The average preschool cost is \$8,052 in 2012. Since 2013-14, DHS has seen a 54 percent increase in the number of applications for POD subsidies.

Preparing our young children to be ready to learn and thrive before they reach kindergarten not only helps to improve their lives as individuals, it improves the lives of our communities.

Having Preschool Open Doors keep its doors open is critical to Hawai'i's most vulnerable children and families. Maintaining the annual funding of \$6 million for DHS to keep running this program. Hawai'i's families need this program for our keiki.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge committee members to restore \$6 million in POD subsidies this session.

Committee on Finance

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2015, 3:30 p.m.

From: Mary Weir, Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE)

Re: Support of SB 64 SD3 Relating to Human Services - making appropriations for positions and the continued implementation of the preschool open doors program and for subsidies for the program.

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mary Weir, Co-Chair of the FACE Education Task Force. Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE) is a diverse, grassroots, interfaith, non-profit organization working on issues important to our members and all the people of Hawaii. The education of our children is of great concern to us.

FACE requests restoration of \$6 million for the proposed biennium budget for the Department of Human Services. We know that many families cannot afford to send their children to preschool. Therefore, we like that Preschool Open Doors prioritizes enrollment to underserved and at risk children and to late born 5 year olds not eligible to start Kindergarten. Many of the families served are single parents. Without State assistance, these parents would have to stop working or quit school, a situation that would benefit no one, not the parent, child or State.

Preschool Open Doors (POD) with a budget of 6 million dollars currently serves about 1300 families each year. Yet we know that over 2208 applicants applied for the program this year so the need for early childhood programs in Hawaii is clearly not being met.

If the Executive Budget of the SFY 2016-2017 biennium requests only the \$1.6 million in the annual DHS budget, then only 242 children each year of the biennium will be served each school year by POD, instead of the 1,287 children currently being served. We simply cannot go backwards and deny 1,045 children the opportunity to attend preschool. It would be a hardship on the families, and the children denied attendance would be less prepared for kindergarten.

We request that you support S.B.64 SD3 and restore \$6 million for the proposed biennium budget for the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

841 Bishop St., Suite 301
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



Telephone: 808 926-1530
Contact@HEECoalition.org

House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair

April 2, 2015

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Committee Members:

This testimony is in support for SB64 SD3, relating the Preschool Open Doors program.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 40 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

We are in support of SB64 SD3, which makes appropriations for positions and the continued implementation of the preschool open doors program and for subsidies for the program. Having a strong foundation in school readiness not only gives children the advantage to transitioning to the K-12 system, but also can have lasting effects to positive outcomes over the span of a child's lifetime. In 2013, HE'E supported legislation to create Preschool Open Doors, the statewide school readiness program. The Coalition has particularly been concerned about the late-born four year olds, who have not been able to attend public Kindergarten from the 2014-2015 year. We like the fact that Preschool Open Doors prioritizes late born four-year olds as well underserved and at-risk children. We encourage the committee to restore funding to this important early learning program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawaii
Alliance for Place Based Learning
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
Coalition for Children with Special Needs
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawaii
*Good Beginnings Alliance
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Charter School Network
*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
*Hawaii State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
*Kaho'omiki
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i
*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Punahou School PUEO Program

Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu
Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice-Chair

House Committee on Finance

From: Liz Chun, Early Education Policy Consultant

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2015, 3:30 pm, Conference Room 308

Subject: **SB 64, SD3: Relating to Human Services**

I submit this testimony **urging you to appropriate funding for positions and the continued implementation of the Preschool Open Doors Program and for subsidies for the program**. I understand that this \$6 million request will continue the current fiscal year level of POD funding to provide coverage for about 1,000 four and five- year-olds to attend preschool.

Since 1990, Preschool Open Doors has offered funding for preschool tuition to families whose incomes are below 200% of the Federal Poverty Index. For example, a family of four could have a gross monthly income of up to \$4806 a month and qualify for tuition assistance. For many families this is their only alternative for access to preschool. Even this year the program could only serve half of the number who applied.

Across the State, parents have come forward to plead for investment in a statewide preschool system. Kindergarten teachers tell us children who have not attended preschool – especially those at risk – are not ready. Local advocates for young children have made the research case as to why a state investment in early learning is essential for Hawaii.

Please do not take another step to decrease Hawaii's support for our keiki.

Families in Hawaii have lost access to Junior Kindergarten. Much to our disappointment, the Amendment which would have allowed funding to increase early childhood education spaces did not pass in November 2014. Please DO NOT continue this downward trend by also denying children access to preschool by eliminating the Preschool Open Doors program.

Preschool involvement is an important predictor of low-income and gap group children's future success in school. The well-known report From Neurons to Neighborhoods states that, "Striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten. These differences are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, and they are predictive of subsequent academic performance." Preschool experiences help to alleviate these disparities.

Is Hawaii truly sincere about addressing the school readiness and success of our youngest? By demonstrating support for Preschool Open Doors, you have the opportunity to show that you believe the future of our state resides in the success of our keiki. They deserve your support. Please do not forget them.

Thank you for your attention.

Contact Information: lizchun@hawaii.rr.com

FIN-Jo

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 11:50 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: jfarnsworth@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB64 on Apr 2, 2015 15:30PM*

SB64

Submitted on: 3/31/2015

Testimony for FIN on Apr 2, 2015 15:30PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JoAnn Farnsworth	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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LATE

April 1, 2015

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Member of the House Committee on Finance

From: Caroline Hayashi, President

RE: Waikiki Community Center Support for SB64 SD3

Waikiki Community Center (WCC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency that has provided services to those who live and work in Waikiki since 1978, including operating a licensed preschool and toddler program targeting children from low-income families. More than 70% of our preschool families are of low to moderate income and more than 20% of them rely on Preschool Open Doors funding for their children to be able to attend preschool.

These families are primarily single-parent headed households who work full time, some work two jobs or more to make ends meet. Without preschool open doors funding, these families will likely lose their subsidies after June of this year and will be unable to continue sending their children to preschool.

The critical importance of quality early childhood education for school readiness is well documented in numerous research studies. Equally well-documented is the academic achievement gap between children from lower and higher income families and the fact that quality early learning is one of the few interventions that can successfully close this gap. Therefore, access to early education for low-income families is one of the best investments the state can continue to make as it has been demonstrated that children who start kindergarten insufficiently prepared most often fall even further each subsequent year, when the issue becomes much more costly and challenging to address.

In addition to the benefit of giving every child the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn, POD allows many single-headed households to continue to be fully employed rather than having to be supported by government subsidies due to a lack of childcare. Almost all of our POD families are single-parent households, as are more than half of POD families statewide.

We ask that you please support SB64 SD3 to restore \$6 million per year biennial funding for the Preschool Open Doors program, which represents a critical lifeline to many of our families and thousands of others around the state. Without this funding, so many of our families will be unable to continue sending their children to preschool. While more than 70% of our families are low-income, more than 95% of them meet state developmental standards and 100% of our 4 to 5 year olds were successfully prepared for kindergarten this past year.

POD funding allows our children the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn and potentially saves the state even more than this initial investment by preventing the need for remediation within the Hawaii Department of Education system and keeping families gainfully employed. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



LATE

PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Finance

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW
Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: **Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. in Conf. Rm. 308**

Testimony in Support for SB64 SD3, Relating to Human Services

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** for SB64 SD3, which would make appropriations for the continued implementation of the preschool open doors program. PHOCUSED is a nonprofit membership and advocacy organization that works together with community stakeholders to impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our community, including low-income families with young children in the home.

Hawaii has the 5th highest poverty rate in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau's supplemental poverty measure. As a result, many Hawaii families struggle to afford basic living costs, including housing and child care. According to PATCH, child care is generally the **second highest** cost that Hawaii families pay after rent or mortgage. The Preschool Open Doors program provides much needed subsidies for child care at a licensed facility for 1,284 low-income children across Hawaii in FY 2014-2015.

Without the appropriation provided by this bill, many low-income families in Hawaii will no longer be able to access Preschool Open Doors services. The program is critical because it prioritizes underserved and at-risk children, and promotes school readiness in a state where only 14.5% of children statewide indicate readiness for Kindergarten. Without the support of Preschool Open Doors, children from low-income families in Hawaii will be less likely to have the strong start to their education that is needed to provide the bridge to a successful college experience/career that will change their family's financial / social tree for generations to come.

Once again, PHOCUSED strongly supports SB64 SD3, and urges you to pass this bill out of committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at admin@phocused-hawaii.org.



LATE

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair,
and Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President/CEO Parents And Children Together

RE: **TESTIMONY in Strong Support: SB 64 SD3: Relating to Human Services**

HEARING DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2015; 3:30 PM; Conference Room 308

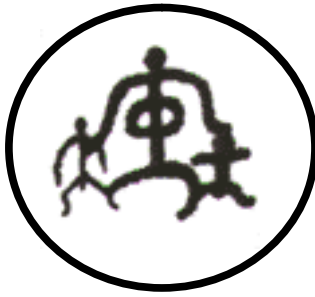
My name is Ryan Kusumoto. I am the President & CEO of Parents And Children Together and have been an advocate for early childhood education for many years.

I strongly urge you to support SB 64 SD3 to restore appropriations in biennial funding for the Preschool Open Doors program. This program is operated by the Department of Human Services and serves 1,287 4 and 5 year olds statewide. Nearly half of the children served in this program come from single-parent households. Without your support, \$6 million for this critical safety net program will end on June 30, 2015, which means thousands of children will not be prepared for kindergarten. Having Preschool Open Doors keep its doors open is critical to Hawaii's most vulnerable children and families.

The Preschool Open Doors program has helped to level the educational playing field for children from poor families. The program has helped to ensure they arrive at kindergarten prepared with basic school readiness skills learned while in preschool. Their school readiness skills enable the entire class to move forward together, learning with and from each other.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 13,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: developmental screening, early childhood education, child abuse/neglect and domestic violence prevention and intervention, mental health support, youth activities, and community and economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 64 SD3**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



HAWAI'I EARLY INTERVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL

1350 South King St. Suite 200 ☞ Honolulu Hawai'i 96814

LATE

Date: April 3, 2015

To: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Fr: Michael C. Fahey, Chair, Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council

Re: **SUPPORT – SB 64, SD3 (HSCR1173) – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES
COMMENTS**

On behalf of the Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council (HEICC), I submit this testimony in **support** of SB 64, SD3, which makes appropriations for positions and the continued implementation of the preschool open doors program and for the subsidies for the program.

Governor John Waihe'e established the Preschool Open Doors (POD) project in 1990. The current reduction of \$6 million in funding from the FY2014-15 budget has put over 1,000 vulnerable children and families in jeopardy. The POD project promotes school readiness by providing childcare subsidies to eligible families for the year prior to kindergarten for their late born 4 year olds who no longer can begin kindergarten due to the age change. Specifically, it provides for underserved and at-risk children born between August 1 and December 31, 2009.

If these funds are not returned to the budget the chance of these children needing remedial and special education services when they enter kindergarten is much higher with a much higher cost the state. These are the facts:

- 85% of your brain is developed in the first five years of life, yet
- 42% of keiki in Hawai'i do not attend preschool before Kindergarten
- 1 out of every 3 children in Hawai'i is not reading at grade level by 3 grade
- Child care is generally the second largest expense in family budgets after rent or mortgage
- Average cost of child care in Hawaii is \$800 per month
- The average cost of preschool in Hawai'i is over \$9,600 per year
- For 4 year-olds, parents in urban areas of Hawai'i pay 52% more than parents in rural areas, which include the Neighbor Islands
- Hawai'i ranks eighth among the 10 least affordable states in the country

For these reasons, the HEICC supports this measure. Thank you for your time and consideration.

